

Rock Energy's Annual Survey Hunts for Natural Gas Leaks

Natural gas technicians at Rock Energy Cooperative spent three weeks this spring surveying all 173 miles of the co-op's gas mains to hunt for any leaks.

"Natural gas is one of the safest and most reliable forms of energy," said Randy Gant, natural gas superintendent. "Leak detection surveys like this one help Rock Energy maintain its excellent safety record."

Armed with a remote methane leak detector, the technicians traveled area roads and streets in a slow-moving utility vehicle to ensure the safety and reliability of natural gas service to members. The state-of-the-art detector has a range of 100 feet and sounds an alarm when any methane—the primary component of natural gas—is detected.

"This is a very efficient and effective way to detect any natural gas leaks along the road right-of-way and street openings, like manholes and pavement cracks," Gant said. "When leaks are detected, the technicians classify them based on their severity and crews are dispatched to remedy the situations."

The following information will help you and your families stay safe around natural gas.

How can I recognize a natural gas leak?

- **By smell:** Natural gas is colorless and odorless, but gas providers add a chemical that makes it smell like rotten eggs so any leaks can be easily detected.
- **By sound:** A hissing or roaring sound coming from a natural gas line might be a sign of a leak.
- **By sight:** If you see unexplained dead grass, natural gas might be leaking. Dirt or debris blowing in the air and water bubbling in a puddle, pond, or creek are other signs.



Gas foreman Jason Mayer, left, and gas technician Robby Jones use a remote methane leak detector during the co-op's annual natural gas survey.

What should I do if I suspect a leak?

If you smell a faint gas odor:

- Make sure all gas appliances and burners on your stove are turned off completely.
- Open one or more windows and wait a few minutes for the gas odor to dissipate before investigating further.
- Check the pilot lights on your gas furnace, water heater, stove, and oven.
- Don't try to relight a gas appliance while you can still smell gas.
- If you need assistance relighting the pilot light, call a heating or plumbing contractor.

If you smell a strong odor:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Do not use the telephone or cell phone until you reach a safe location away from the suspected leak. Then call Rock Energy at (866) 752-4550 to report the location.
- Do not light a match or turn on or off any switches, flashlights, garage door openers, or other appliances

because an electric arc might ignite the gas.

How can I prevent pipeline damage?

- Call 811 before you dig or excavate to avoid hitting a natural gas pipeline or other buried utility line. State law requires people to call at least two days before any digging project. Utilities then will send a representative to the site so all underground lines can be marked. The call and service are free.
- Remember that Rock Energy maintains buried gas pipes up to your meter. All pipes beyond that are the member's responsibility and should be periodically inspected for corrosion and leaks.

How can I get additional information?

If you have any questions about natural gas safety, we would be happy to provide you with further information. Just call us at (866) 752-4550 or email questions@rock.coop.



More Power to You

Electricity Remains a Great Value

Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Imagine if the cost of electricity we use fluctuated as much as the price we pay at the gas pump whenever we fill up our vehicles.

Through the years, electricity has remained a good value. From 2000 to 2010, gasoline has shot up 10.9 percent on average every single year, while the price of electricity has risen only 3.7 percent, according to the

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. And those statistics don't take into account what's been happening lately.

The price of gas was just \$3.12 a gallon when 2011 started. Five months later, it hit a record high of \$4.10 in the Janesville-Beloit area. That's an increase of more than 30 percent already this year, and some are predicting that the price will get even higher as summer approaches.

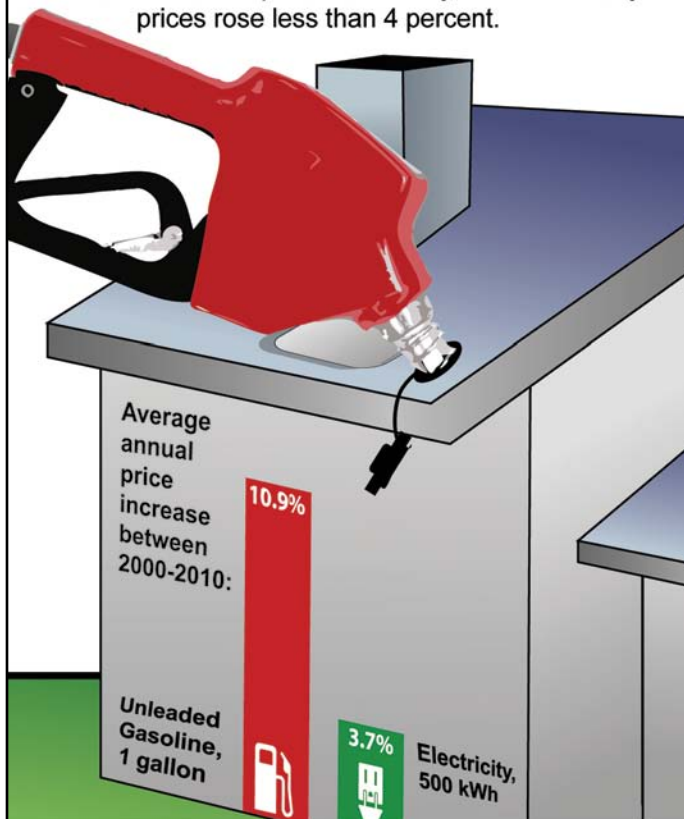
When you consider how reliable electricity is—it's available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—its value goes up even more. And consider how much we rely on electricity today—to power all our electronic devices, our high-definition TVs, and other energy-hungry appliances.

When our co-op was founded 75 years ago, the first members paid a \$3.50 minimum monthly bill that included 50 kilowatt hours of power. At the time, they had difficulty using that much power because homes had few electric appliances.

Today, the average member uses about 1,000 kilowatt hours a month, and our desire for electricity shows no sign of diminishing. So the next time you flip a switch, turn on that TV, or charge up your cell phone, remember the value that electricity holds. At Rock Energy, we're doing everything we can to keep your energy bills affordable.

Filling Up on VALUE

Electricity continues to be a bargain, especially when compared to other consumer goods. Imagine if your electric bill fluctuated as much as prices at the pump. On average, over the past decade gas prices have risen almost 11 percent annually, while electricity prices rose less than 4 percent.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Mainstream Graphics

Capital Credits Distributed

I hope you noticed that the energy bill you received in May included your annual capital credit distribution, which represents your economic participation as a co-op member.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, Rock Energy and other energy co-ops aren't in business to make money. So when there are profits, they go back to you—our members. Capital credits are based on usage, so the more electricity you purchase, the more capital credits are earned and eventually returned to you.

In 2011, Rock Energy distributed more than \$600,000 in capital credits to eligible members on their May statements. Since it was founded 75 years ago, the co-op has paid back about \$10 million to past and current members. The return of capital credits is just one reason why it pays to be a member of Rock Energy Cooperative.

(Continued on 16d) ▶



Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

Join us Saturday, June 25,
for **Rock Energy Family Night**
at the Ballpark

Co-sponsored by Touchstone Energy

Beloit Snappers vs. Cedar Rapids Kernels

- Game starts at 7 p.m.
- Come early for player autographs from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m.
- Stay late for a spectacular fireworks show after the game.

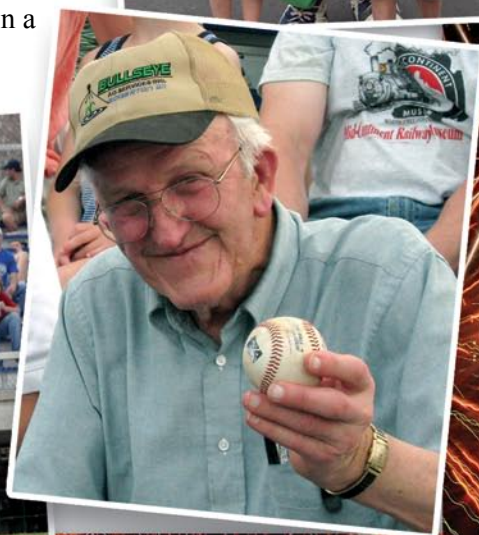


Stop at either our Janesville or South Beloit offices to buy game tickets and special Rock Energy Co-op seat cushions. Tickets are \$2 each (\$6.50 value) and good for any Snappers home game in 2011. Foam seat cushions are \$3 each or 2 for \$5. Take them with you to Snappers games and other sporting events.

Rock Energy members can buy food vouchers at the ballpark on Saturday, June 25. Get a hot dog, chips, and soda or pizza and soda for just \$2! The first 30 kids win a special gift! (Must be accompanied by adult member.)



Show your Co-op Connections Card to buy food vouchers at the ballpark. If you don't have one, stop at either Rock Energy office location to get yours free.



Longtime Members Host June Dairy Breakfast

When you're expecting more than 4,000 people for breakfast, you have to start planning early.

Preparations for the Rock County Dairy Breakfast at the Daluge Farm, a Rock Energy Cooperative member since 1938, started last summer with several remodeling projects. Planning kicked into high gear this spring with lots of yard work, painting projects, and general cleanup around the farm.

The last order of business will be hoping for good weather on Saturday, June 4, so a large crowd shows up to eat a hearty farm breakfast, tour the dairy farm, and enjoy the petting zoo, music, and other entertainment.

Peter Daluge owns the 160-acre farm on County G south of Janesville. Operating the farm with him are his son, Peter, and daughter Erin. Daughters Megan and Bridget also help out on a part-time basis. The family milks 125 Registered Holsteins and grows hay and corn to feed the herd, which produces



Above: Peter Daluge, daughter Erin, and son Peter are expecting a big turnout for the dairy breakfast. Left: Cora and Roman Wilcox pose in front of a barn that is still used today.

Rock County Dairy Breakfast

When: 6:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, June 4.

Where: Daluge Farm, 3719 S. County G, Janesville.

Cost: \$6 for adults, \$2 for children.

Details: All-you-can-eat pancake breakfast with ham patties, yogurt, applesauce, cheese, milk, and ice cream sundaes.

Activities: Farm tour, petting zoo, corn box, music, and more.

7,000 pounds of milk each day.

Peter's great-grandparents, Roman and Cora Wilcox, purchased the farm in 1908. At that time, the cows were milked by hand and lanterns provided the only lights.

But everything changed in 1938 when the farm was connected to the lines of Rock County Electric Cooperative Association, which is now Rock Energy Cooperative. Soon after electricity was available, the family switched from milking all the cows by hand to using electric milking machines.

In 1958, Peter's father, Harlan, constructed one of the first double-four herringbone milking parlors in Wisconsin. Peter uses the same setup today but has expanded it to a double-six.

Through the years, the co-op has provided reliable electrical service,

which is essential to a dairy farm, Peter said. The herd is milked three times a day—at 5 a.m., noon, and 8 p.m.

Peter said he also appreciates that as a Rock Energy member he is financially invested in the co-op. He considers the capital credits that he earns each year as a form of life insurance. In fact, he likes co-ops so much that a year ago he started selling the farm's milk to Midwest Dairymen, a cooperative of milk producers based in Rockford.

The Daluges are excited about hosting the dairy breakfast and showing off the farm that the family has operated for five generations. Because the farm is centrally located in Rock County, Peter anticipates a good turnout with as many as 5,000 people visiting the farm on June 4 if the weather cooperates. ■

More Power to You

(Continued from page 16a)

See You at the Ballpark, Dairy Breakfast

Plan to join us on Saturday, June 25, for our 10th annual Rock Energy Family Night at the Ballpark to see the Beloit Snappers play the Cedar Rapids KERNELS. See page 16b for all the details.

We started the annual event in 2002 as a way to bring families together for a fun summer evening. It must be working because the folks at the Snappers office tell us that Rock Energy Night is one of their most popular promotions of the season.

Besides seeing a great minor league team, you can get player autographs, participate in some fun games between innings, eat tasty ballpark food at reduced prices, and enjoy a fantastic fireworks show. Tickets are \$2 each and must be purchased in advance at either our Janesville or South Beloit office.

Also, consider visiting the Daluge Farm for the Rock County Dairy Breakfast on Saturday, June 4. The Daluges are longtime Rock Energy members who are inviting folks to their farm for a morning filled with food and activities. All the details are on page 16c.

As always, I want to thank you for allowing us to be your energy provider. If we can do anything to improve our service, please let us know. ■



Have a Safe and Happy Independence Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 5. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage, please call (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550.

Get Connected

Check out these great deals offered with your Co-op Connections Card



Fitness Together, 1809 Milton Ave., Janesville
(608) 758-3838 – www.fitnessstogether.com/janesville

Providing quality, private, one-on-one personal fitness training. Our philosophy—"1 Client 1 Trainer 1 Goal"—says it all. Our clients reap the benefits of unique training programs as we help them achieve all their fitness goals in our private training suites.



First Session Free

Nyrie's Flower Shop, 1320 Blackhawk Blvd., South Beloit
(815) 389-4646 – www.nyriesflowershop.com

Committed to offering the finest floral arrangements and gifts, backed by friendly and prompt service. Our professionals are dedicated to making your experience a pleasant one. We always go the extra mile to make your floral gift perfect—tropicals, plants, European/dish gardens, high-style, silk and dried floral arrangements, extensive gift line and gift baskets, gourmet and fruit baskets, greeting cards, and candles.

Nyrie's Flower Shop
800.914.4646

10% Off In-Store Purchase (excluding wire orders and Valentine's Day)

Thunder Shooting Supplies, 24 Front St., Milton
(608) 868-4867 – www.thundershooting.com

Gun shop carrying new and used. Stocking dealer for Glock, Springfield Armory, Charter, and FN. All models of long guns available. Member NRA, National Shooting Sports Foundation, SASS, and Whitetails Unlimited.



5% Off (everything except the gun)

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by participating businesses. You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on prescription drugs and to print online coupons.



Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker,
Editor

P.O. Box 1758
2815 Kennedy Rd.
Janesville, WI 53547

P.O. Box 126
15229 Willowbrook Rd.
South Beloit, IL 61080

(608) 752-4550 • (866) 752-4550